

MARVEL 015

FALL OF X

EWING
ÇINAR
BLEE

X-MEN RED



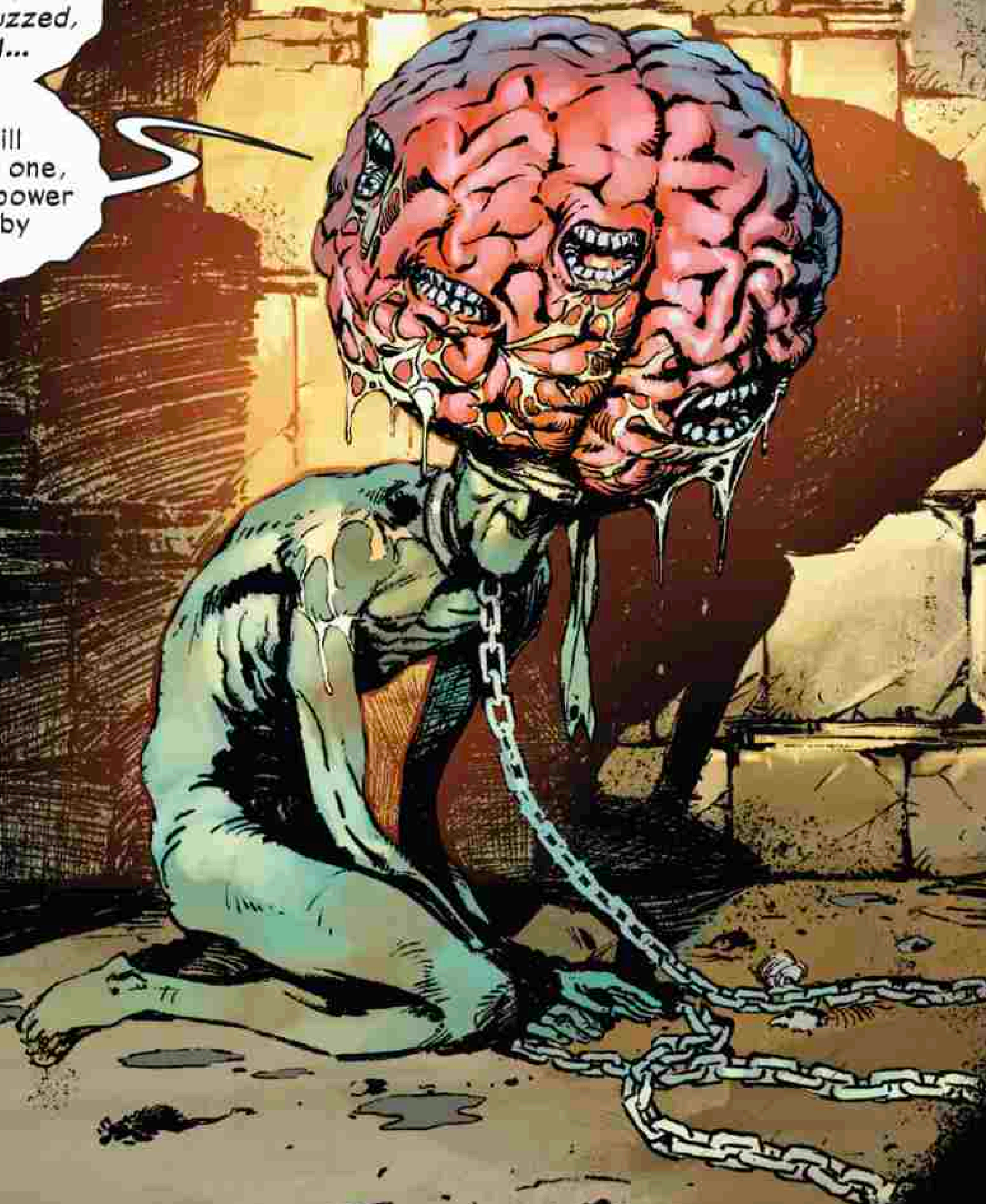
I was born in a *prison*. I have never left, nor can I leave.

Now I find myself in the depths of the *Tower of Broken Thought*...

C-come no closer, I warn ye.

I killed the last food bearer-- his thoughts buzzed, they *stung*...

Blind and chained, I am still *Azazoth*--the dark one, the *mind-ripper*. My power cannot be bound by any other...



I am 6 years old.

I have no power to bind you with, old man. *No weapon at all.* The genetic seers say it will never come...

Hah!
The fools fear Azazoth so much now, they send a *powerless child* to bear him his stale bread!

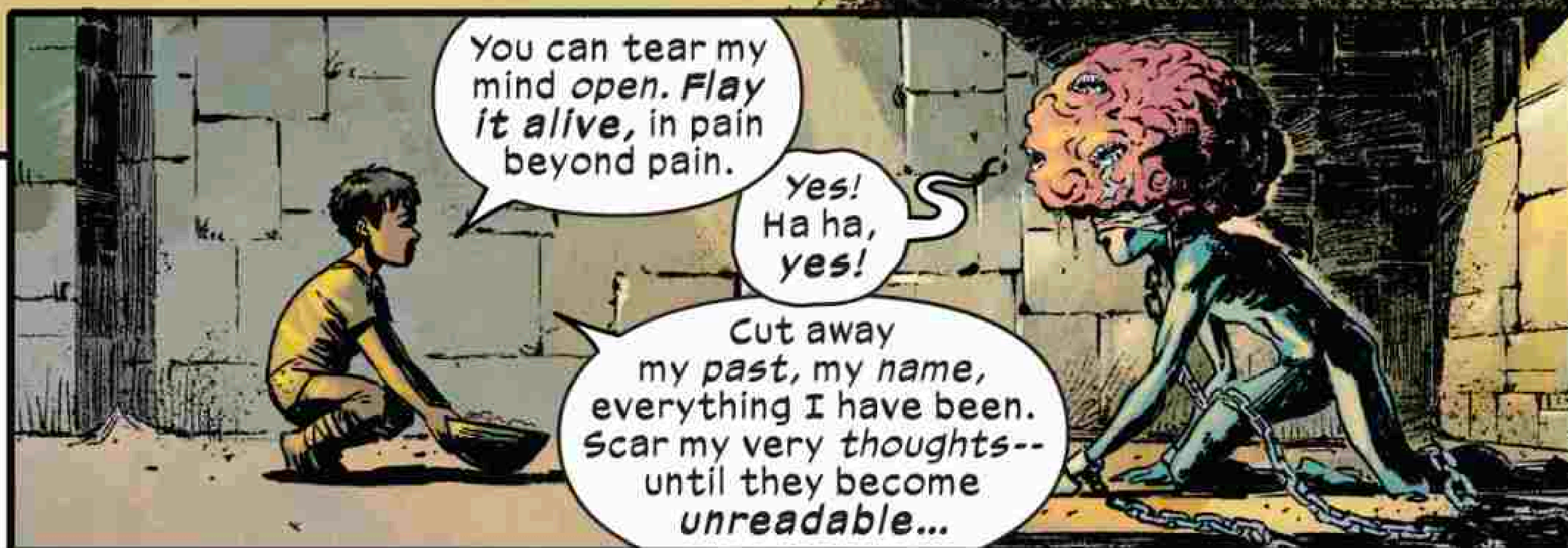


Do you know what I could *do* to you, boy, if you get close?

You can tear my mind open. *Flay it alive*, in pain beyond pain.

Yes! Ha ha, yes!

Cut away my past, my name, everything I have been. Scar my very thoughts-- until they become *unreadable*...



...until I become *invisible*.

This is my earliest memory.





X-MEN RED

15

“NOTHING AND NOBODY”

Al Ewing/Writer
Yildiray Çinar/Artist
Federico Blee/Color Artist
VC's Ariana Maher/Letterer
Tom Muller & Jay Bowen/Design

Stefano Caselli & Jesus Aburtov/Cover Artists

Nicoletta Baldari; Jeff Dekal
/Variant Cover Artists

VC's Ariana Maher/Production
Lauren Amaro/Assistant Editor
Jordan D. White/Editor
C.B. Cebulski/Editor in Chief

X-Men created by
Stan Lee & Jack Kirby

I'm 15 years old. I'm a *blank spot* to the Vile Omnipaths. I've learned to survive. I've learned to take life.

All for this moment.

Any improvement on the *Solem* situation?

We cannot take his DNA by force, O' Genomic Mage. The *adamantium* skin.

There are other means... but he has a certain *discipline* when he wants to.

Physically, he does not... provide...

No need to spell it out.

Great Tarn, be praised...but why covet another's weapon?

To suggest you needed unbreakable metal skin would be a *grave insult* from any of Arakko...

Any of *Amenth* too. But I don't need it--I want it for study. And for...*posthumous glory*, let us say.

I don't fear a life that ends either, Rurik Slime-weeper.

Death is only the *beginning of change*...

If Tarn is so eager for death, I can supply it.

I am *not* so eager...but I'm 15, and I'm out of patience.

Don't.



The Omnipaths can't see into your heart. But I can.

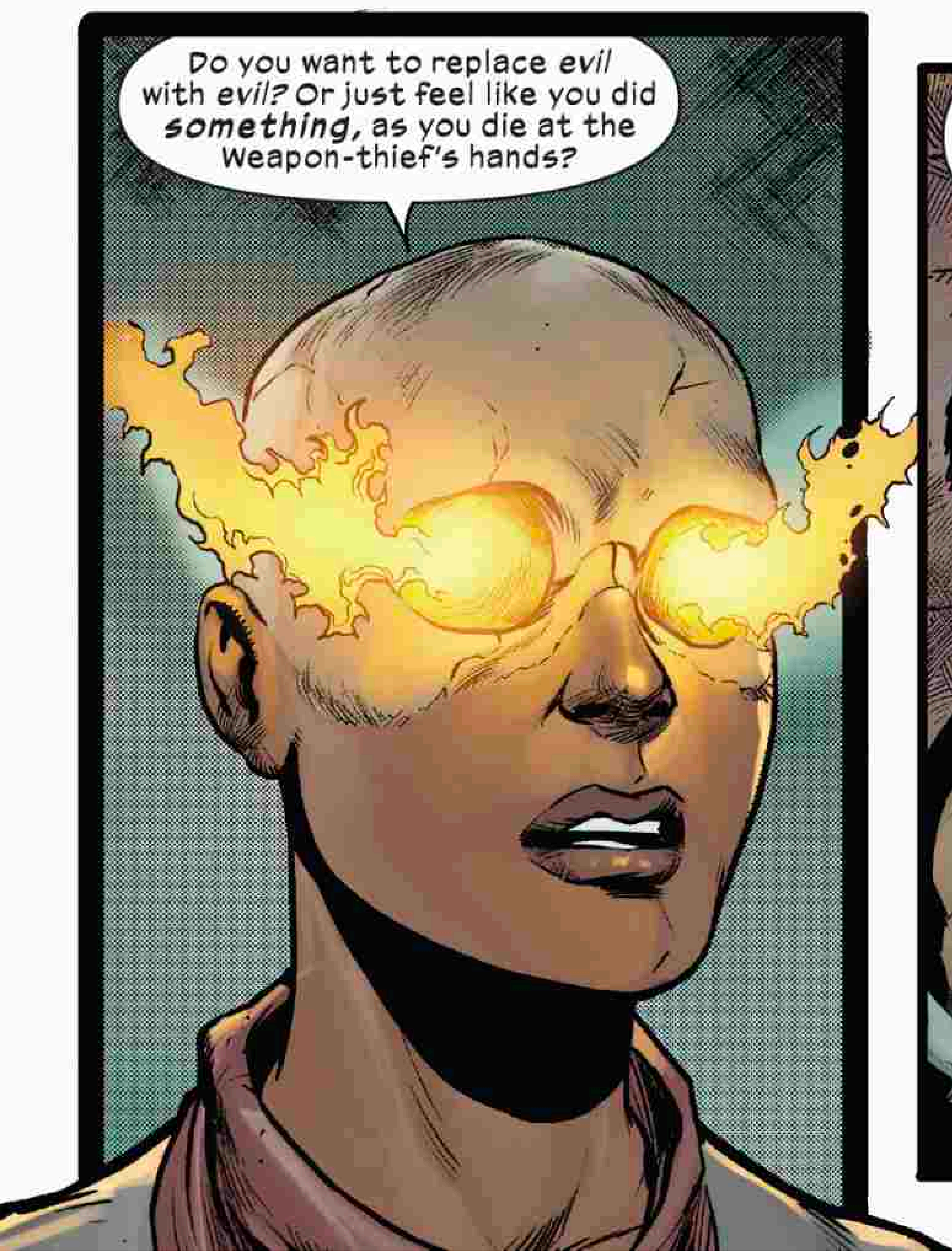
If you do this?

You'll die.

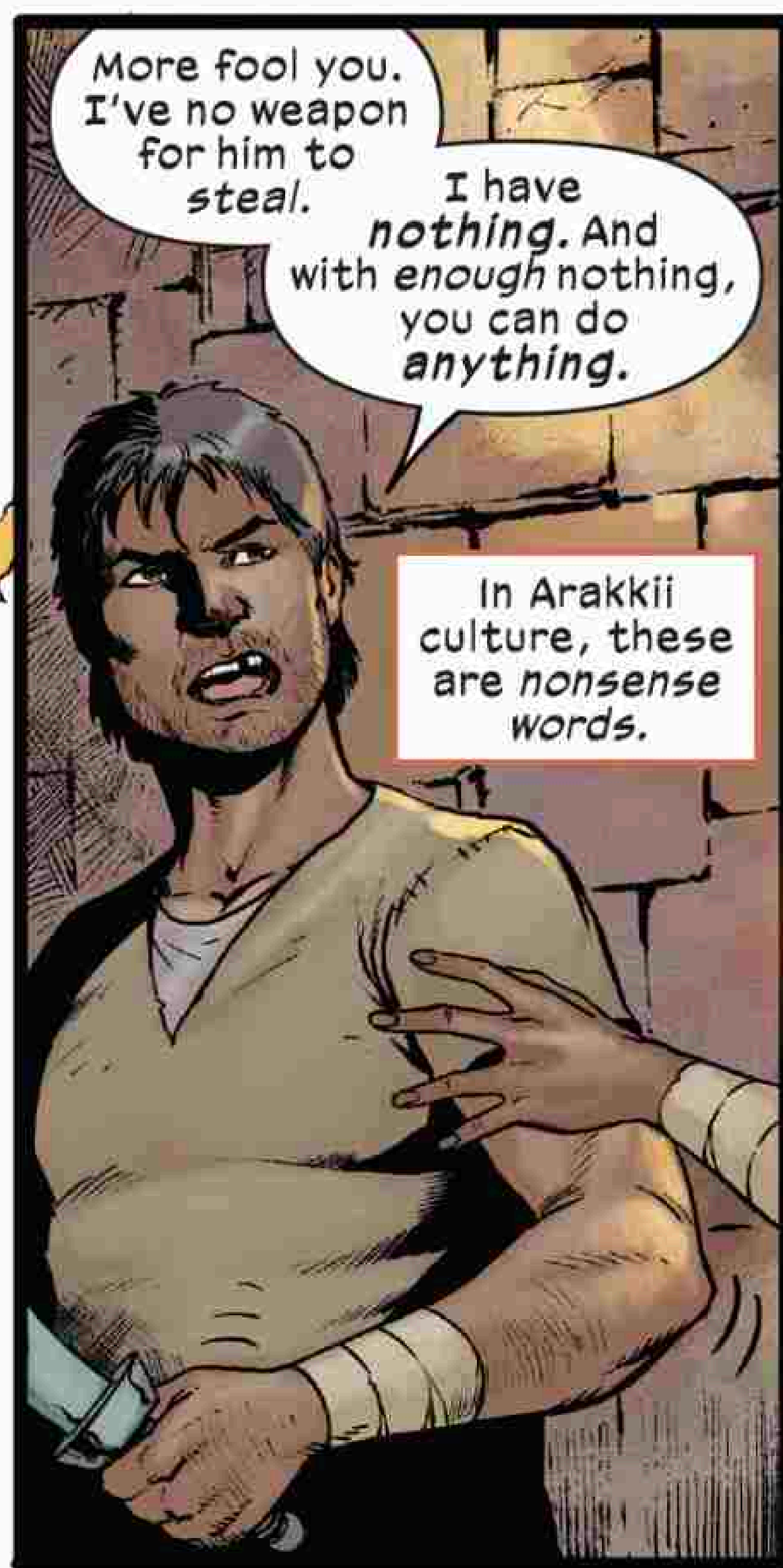
...
Isca's not with him. I may not get a better chance...

To what? Replace him with the next in the chain?

The War-Child, the Summoner Scion, En Sabah Nur's grandson--he's hungry for more power and influence. He'll welcome Tarn's fall.



Do you want to replace evil with evil? Or just feel like you did something, as you die at the Weapon-thief's hands?



More fool you. I've no weapon for him to steal.

I have nothing. And with enough nothing, you can do anything.

In Arakkii culture, these are nonsense words.



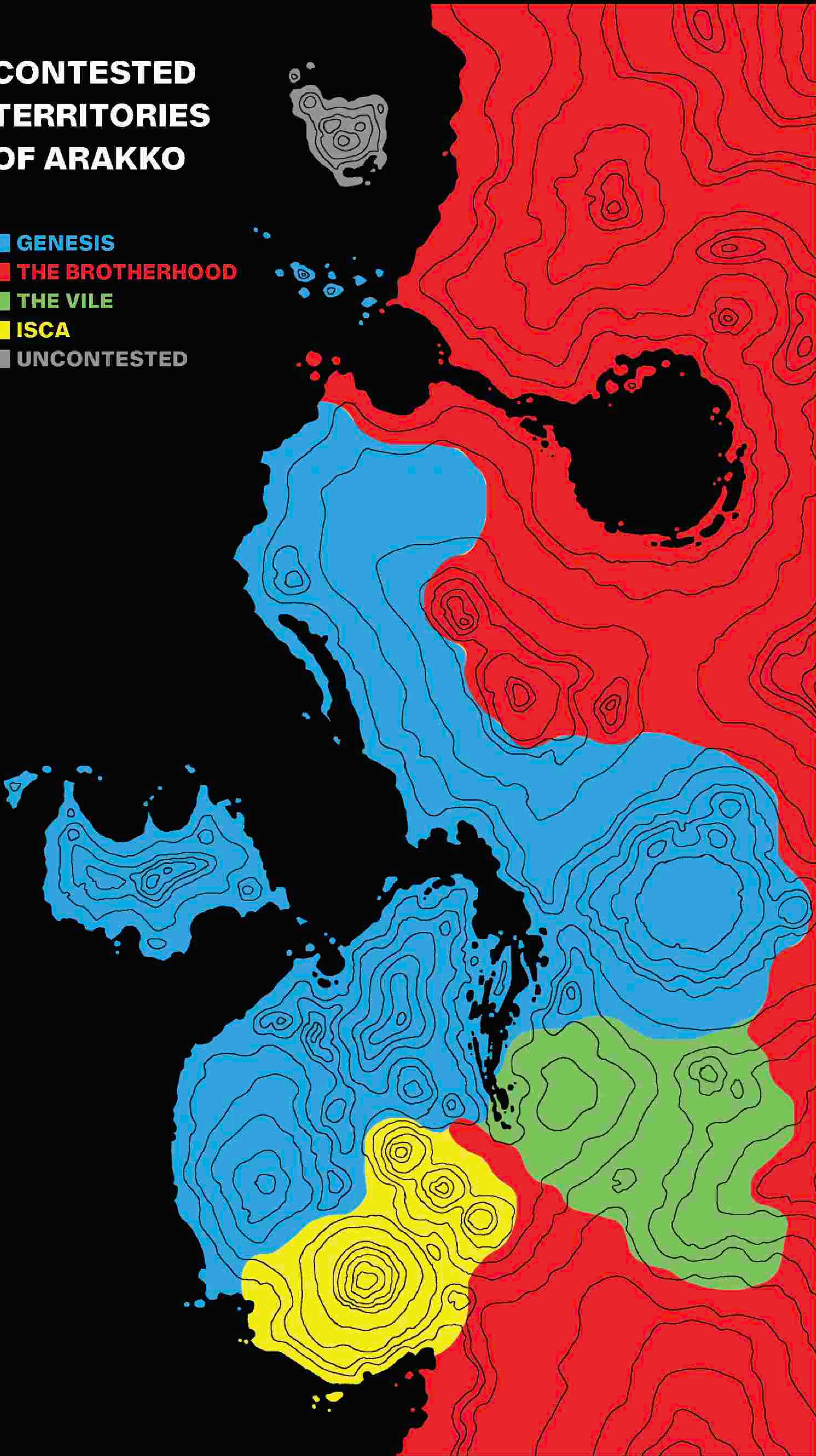
She accepts them immediately.

Then let's not only do one thing.

Her name is Zsora.

CONTESTED TERRITORIES OF ARAKKO

- GENESIS
- THE BROTHERHOOD
- THE VILE
- ISCA
- UNCONTESTED





Here.



Yes.
Here, I think.

Not too far from shore--
but out of their range.

Genesis--as
Seat of Below-Us,
I must protest
this action.



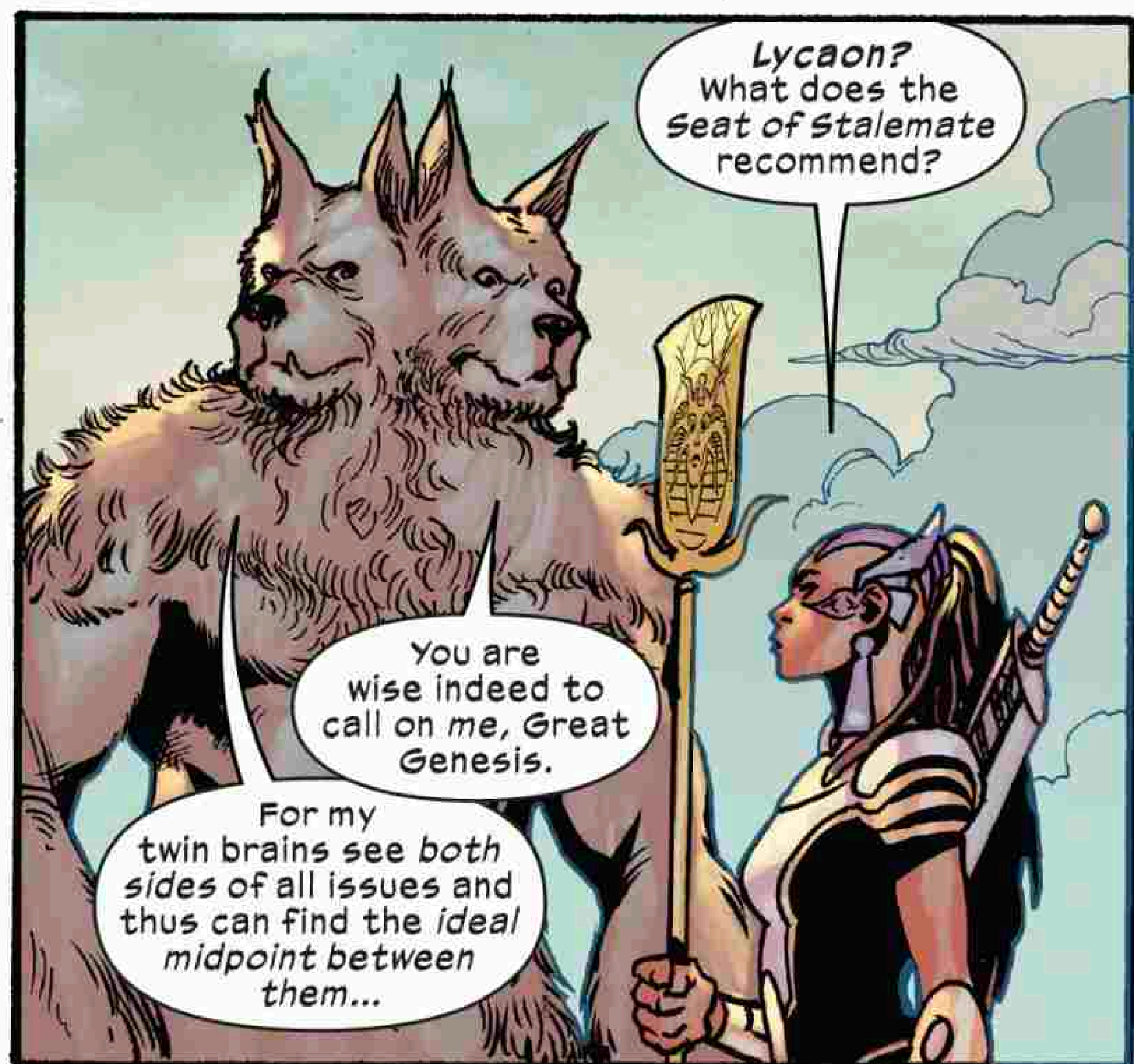
We are Arakkii.
We are enough. And
my ocean...it does
not belong to
the land.

My
children
are not
yours.



This is
not a decision
for the depths,
Sobunar.

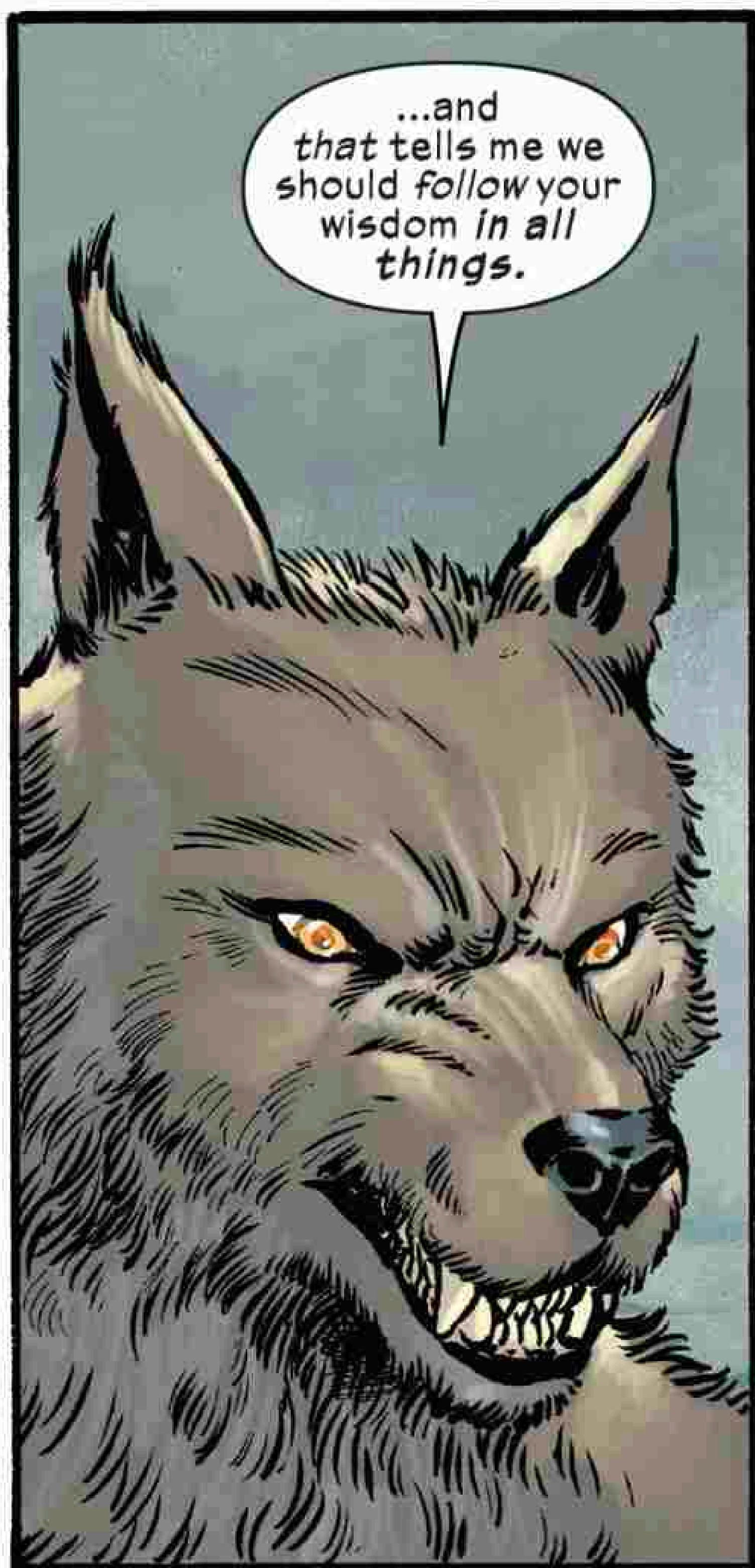
We are at
war--all defers
to the Dawn. And
as neither side can
currently advance
by land...



Lycaon?
What does the
Seat of Stalemate
recommend?

You are
wise indeed to
call on me, Great
Genesis.

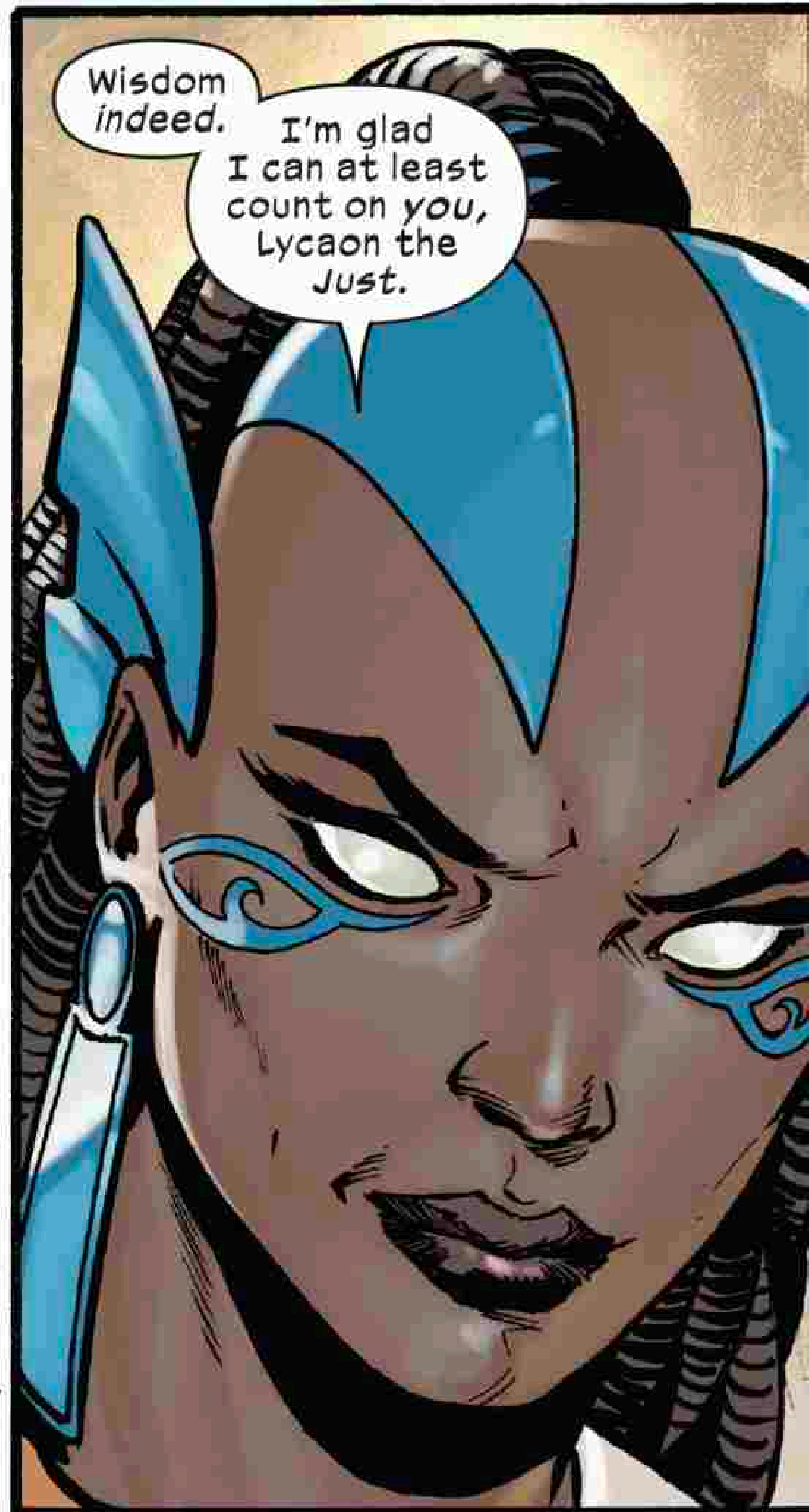
For my
twin brains see both
sides of all issues and
thus can find the ideal
midpoint between
them...



...and that tells me we should follow your wisdom in all things.



Wisdom.



Wisdom indeed.

I'm glad I can at least count on you, Lycaon the Just.



Well, I'm with **Sobunar**. We've got strong boats, built by strong mutants-- we don't need more from his ocean than permission to sail on it.

We don't need any of this plan! Castor's right-- we can answer this challenge ourselves--

No.

Ororo's rebels have weakened not only us with their heresies, but the planet itself--and every part of it. The very concept of Arakko is weakened.

A challenge to all may be answered by all-- and all means all.

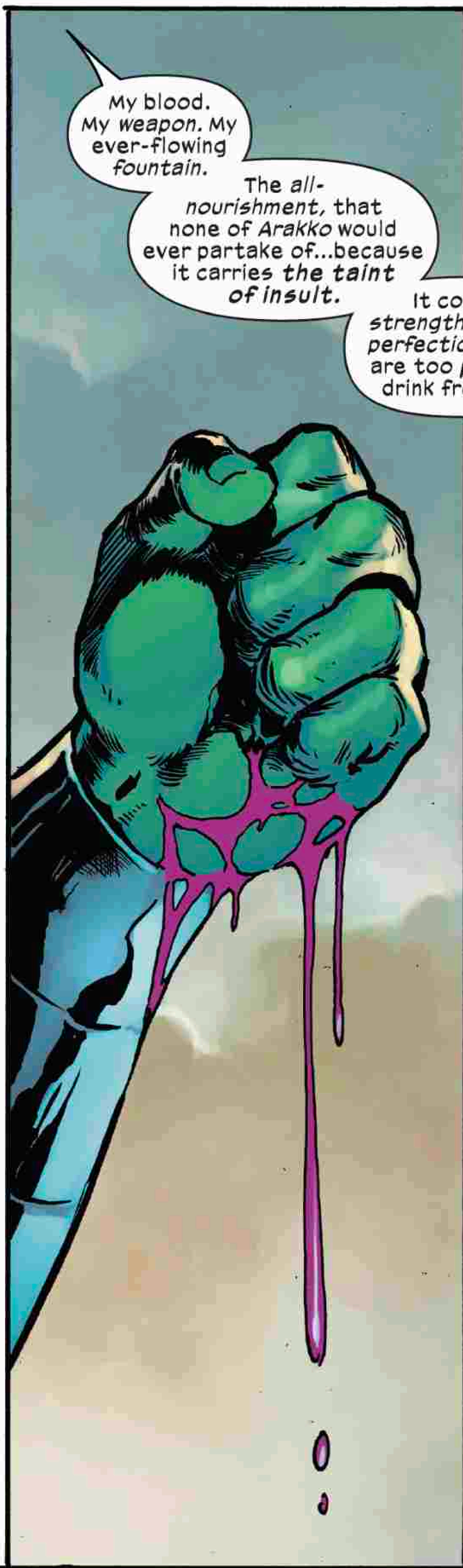
Satis Exotica...



...you have legal permission to proceed.

Drip, drip, drip my blood.

My blood to yours, Sobunar. Blood brothers, now--eh?



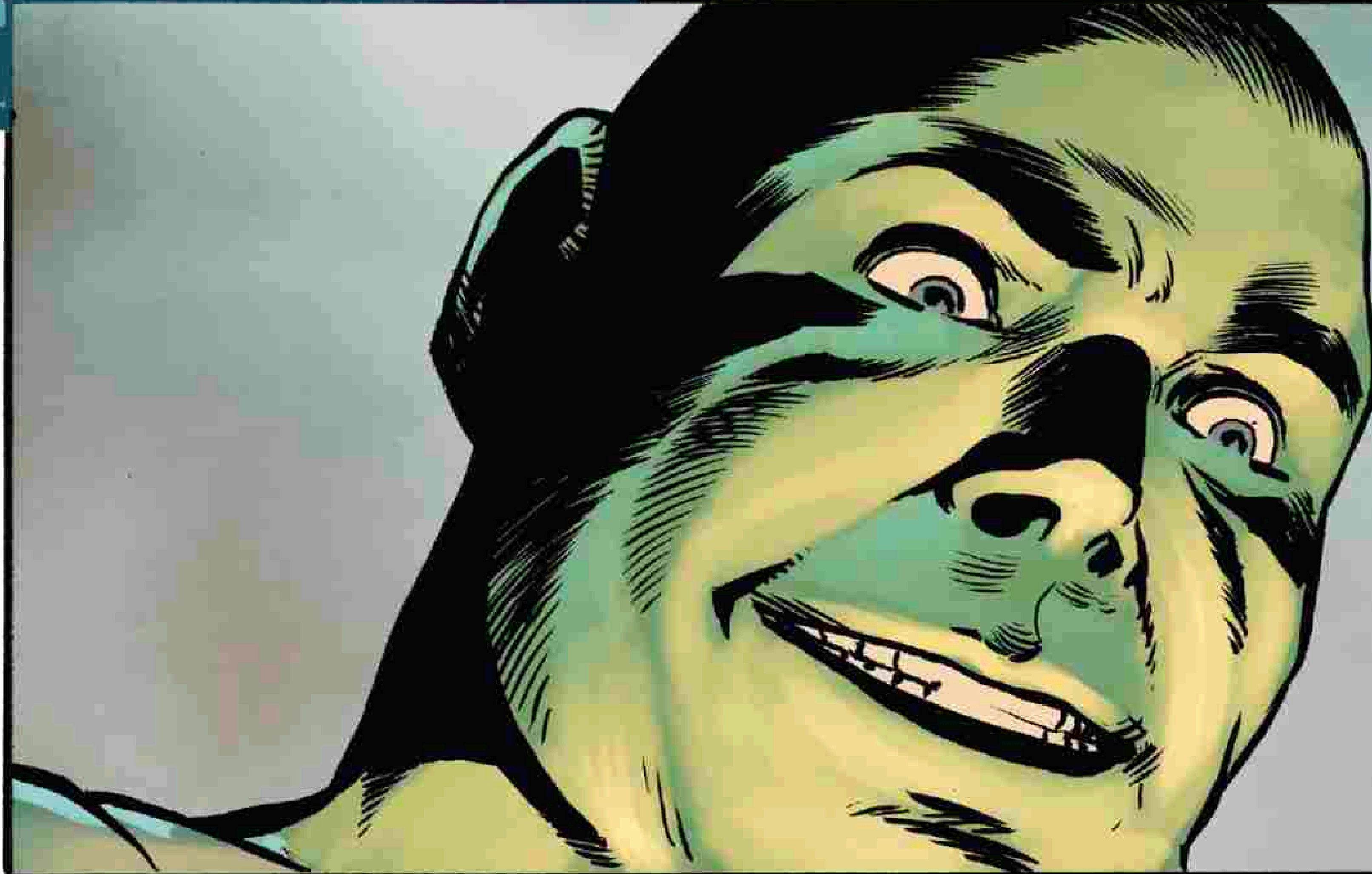
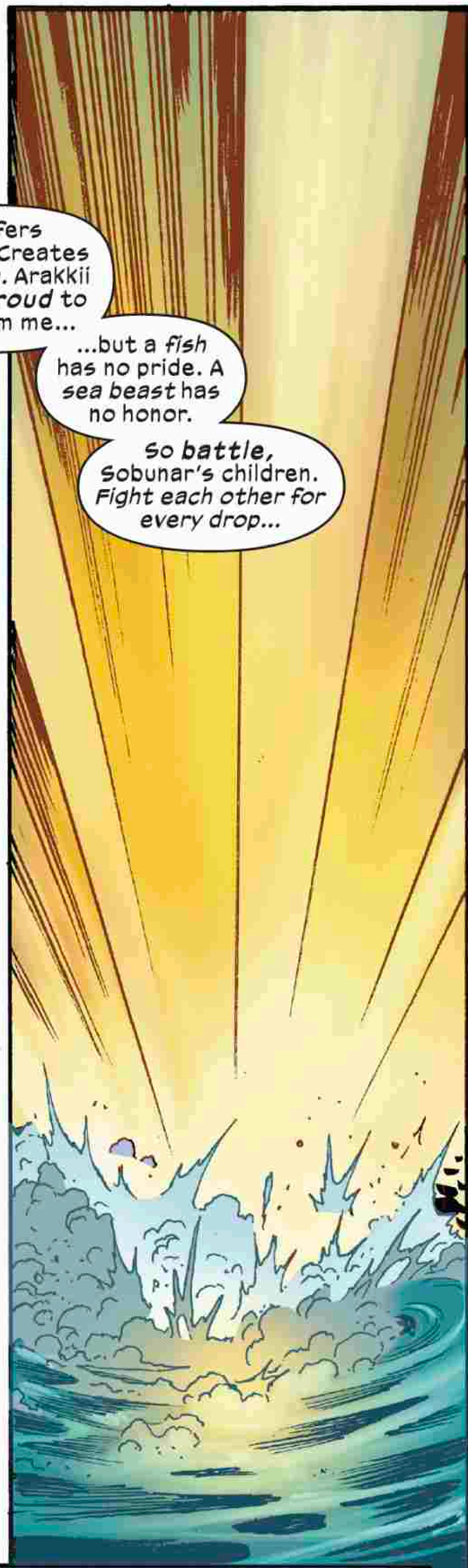
My blood. My weapon. My ever-flowing fountain.

The all-nourishment, that none of Arakko would ever partake of...because it carries the taint of insult.

It confers strength. Creates perfection. Arakkii are too proud to drink from me...

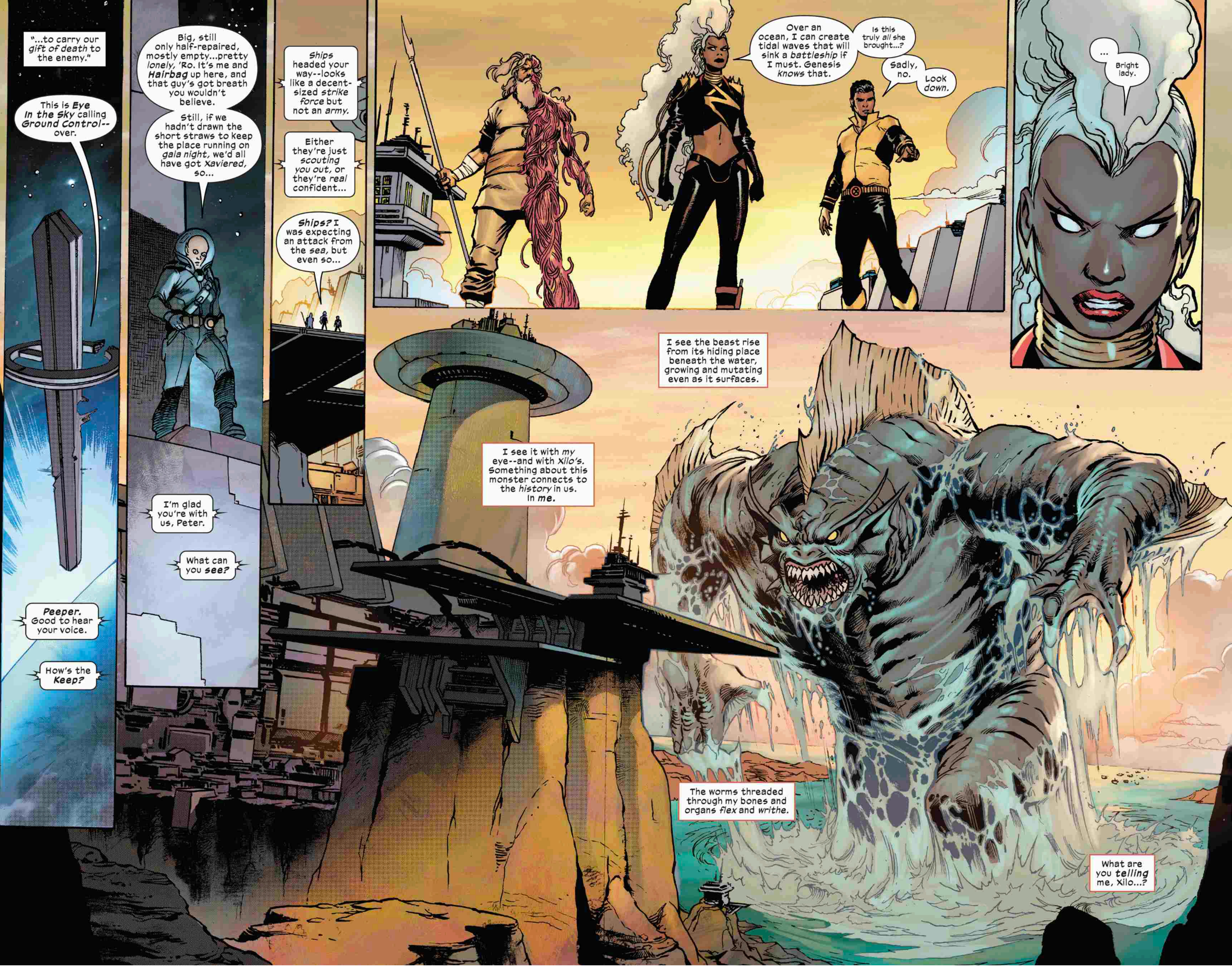
...but a fish has no pride. A sea beast has no honor.

So battle, Sobunar's children. Fight each other for every drop...



...for only one will be worthy of Exotica's gift.

Only one of you will be made great enough...



"...to carry our gift of death to the enemy."

This is Eye In the sky calling Ground Control--over.

Big, still only half-repaired, mostly empty...pretty lonely, 'Ro. It's me and Hairbag up here, and that guy's got breath you wouldn't believe.

Still, if we hadn't drawn the short straws to keep the place running on gala night, we'd all have got Xaviera, so...

Ships headed your way--looks like a decent-sized strike force but not an army.

Either they're just scouting you out, or they're real confident...

Ships? I was expecting an attack from the sea, but even so...

I'm glad you're with us, Peter.

What can you see?

Peeper. Good to hear your voice.

How's the Keep?

Over an ocean, I can create tidal waves that will sink a battleship if I must. Genesis knows that.

Is this truly all she brought...?

Sadly, no.

Look down.

... Bright lady.

I see the beast rise from its hiding place beneath the water, growing and mutating even as it surfaces.

I see it with my eye--and with Xilo's. Something about this monster connects to the history in us. In me.

The worms threaded through my bones and organs flex and writhe.

What are you telling me, Xilo...?

The New History of Arakko

Chapter DCCCXV

In the abyssal prisons, there was little hope to be found, and it came in three forms.

The First Hope was in Obeisance to Annihilation. For it was possible, if you bent the knee and accepted the way things now were, to continue to live, and even to continue to live mostly untroubled, if the Vile did not choose you for their experiments. Indeed, the closer to Annihilation and to the ruling family you stood, the easier it was to believe that you were not conquered, but conquerors. Did not Genesis wear the helm? And did not Genesis rule over the Great Ring? How was this so much different to before?

Not everyone could live that way. Solem, the silver-skinned, who laughed and loved on the battlements and was the song of the siege, attempted to live as freely as he had done, though perhaps more cynically. But eventually, he was forced to choose between his freedom and his pride. He chose the latter, at the cost of a life close to the royal house, the son-in-law Bracken — and for this, he was confined to the Tower of Broken Will. A formality for the sake of War, Bracken's wife and Genesis' child — for Genesis herself had cared little for Bracken, and Annihilation cared for no creature that lived. With his wile and wit, Solem modified his confinement to his liking, and an unspoken truce was established — he would live in luxury, and no more would die at his expert hand.

The Second Hope, of course, was in Death. No Arakkii feared a life that ended.

The Third Hope was the thinnest of all, and that was Rebellion. But the Vile Omnipaths caught even the thought of it eventually, and the punishment was severe — not the death of all but simply the death of one. And this was an effective punishment, for rebellion was most often the dream of romantics — loyal friends, lovers, siblings-in-arms.

But if you could mask your thoughts and emotions — and there were those who could, through power, through training, through sacrifice — there were things that could be done to strike against the systems of Annihilation. Destroying punishment records, disrupting Vile experiments, low-level assassinations — all these saved lives, all these struck at the regime. And there was always the chance that an opportunity would arise to topple it all at a stroke.

And for that chance, the Night Seats waited.

I'm 45
years old.

I have a wife now.
I have children.

I have thirty years of small, secret
actions behind me. I've done much...



...but never
enough.

And I am *Solem of the Silver Skin*, I hold
nothing I can mention in
polite company--and
I call *this wonderful
entertainment.*

You
three honestly
think you have
a hope...

It's not about
hope. To be of
Arakko is to fight
without it.

We fight
knowing we'll lose--
though we'd have more
of a chance if you
helped, Solem...

I let you
meet here, in my
lonely cell, which no one
visits. And I even send
away my *usual* visitors,
just because
I like you --

--and
because your
weapons let you pass
my notes and keep my
secrets. Tarn's great
Omnipaths--so
all-seeing...

...yet blinded by
smoke, burned by
flame, bamboozled
by the lack of
a name...

An epic song I'm
composing for your
awesome victory. Now
what rhymes with
"awesome"?

Dare I say
"foursome"....?

Solem.
I've told you
before.

*Business
before
pleasure.*



In a week, Tarn makes the trek to his *Vile Colleges*--and, this time, *Annihilation* will go with him, to inspect his new abominations.

As protection, the *Horsemen* will ride alongside--and *Isca*, for good measure.

But why all on a single journey?

Fear of the *White Sword*.

His *Hundred* can die as many times as *Isca* can win, after all.



Even so... the *Annihilation Helm* hides the truth even from me, *Syzya*.



And some things are too good to be true...

Maybe.

But I vote with your sister, my love.



This chance comes once and once only--I say we use it.

Ora Serrata dies first. Once out of the law's shackles, the Great Ring can act--

That simple, hmm?



It's our chance, *Solem*--should we ignore it? We don't all have your long life to wait in.

True. I'm ageless and beautiful--and my heart's as unbreakable as my skin.

But that's not true of everyone, is it?

We ignore him, of course. In his cell of luxuries, *Solem* has everything...

...and we have nothing.

Or so we tell ourselves.

The creature lumbers toward Port Prometheus. It is vast, slow, ungainly...a blunt object for blunt hands.

Genesis created the Ten Towers. She rebuilt Arakko as a sleek machine of death. This clumsy attack is unlike her.

In my heart, Xilo squirms...

Ororo takes to the air. No one else lifts a finger. No one sees the need.

The air freezes...

...and in the upper atmosphere, a hailstone forms, the size of a giant's skull.

In hurricane wind, a blade of grass may pierce the bark of a tree...



...and this is
an iceberg.

Death comes
efficiently.
As efficient
as *Genesis*
should be...

Xilo coils in
my spine.

Merged as we
are, he can only
speak in warnings
from his history--
and my own.

The present
becomes
the past...



...the past
I can't forget.

I'm 45 years
old and a day.

At that age, a
man should know
he's a fool.

It's a *fine*
thing, to fight
knowing you
will lose.

Less so
after you've
already
lost.

All that work,
all those years. *Rats*
nipping at the heels of
a *legion*. We had our
suspicions.

But now,
having heard
every word of
your treacherous
plot...well, an
example must
be made.

How? Did
Solem betray
us...?

Don't mention
that name to *War*.
She imagines he
suffers.

Now, your
teleporter has *fled*,
and we will deal with *that*
crime when we catch her.
The prisons are a maze
she can't escape.

But you know
the punishment for
conspirators--one
dies to teach the
others. And in
that law...

...there is
no restriction
for age.

Mother?
Father?

What's
happening...?



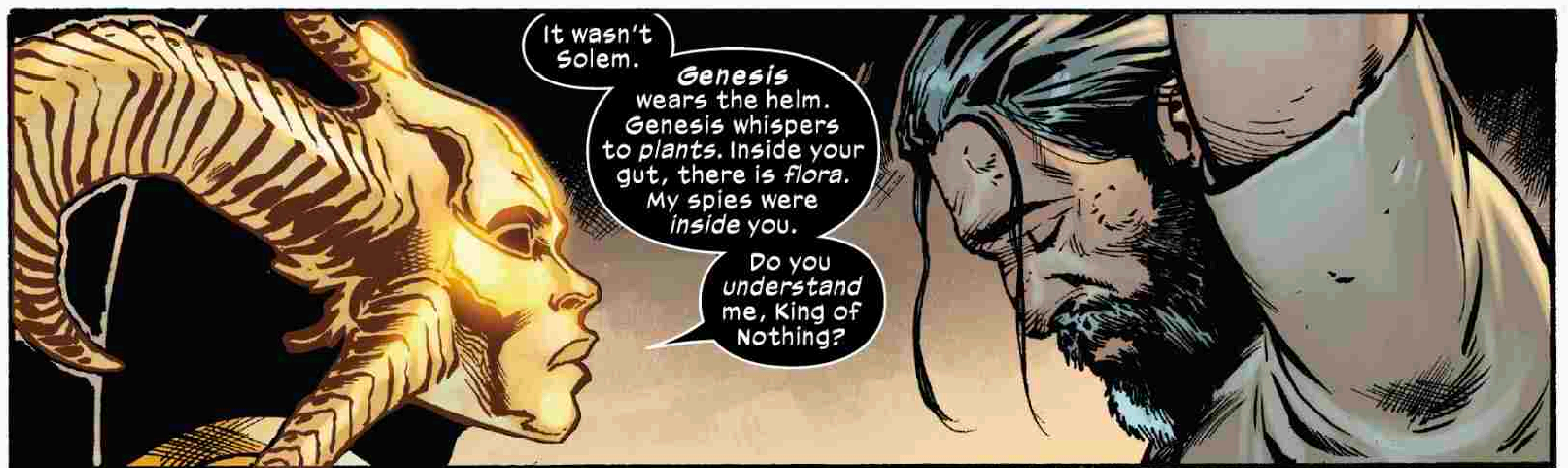


For that is what I have always been...

Has the lesson been learned?

Good.

And now that we all trust each other...a secret.



It wasn't Solem.

Genesis wears the helm. Genesis whispers to plants. Inside your gut, there is flora. My spies were inside you.

Do you understand me, King of Nothing?



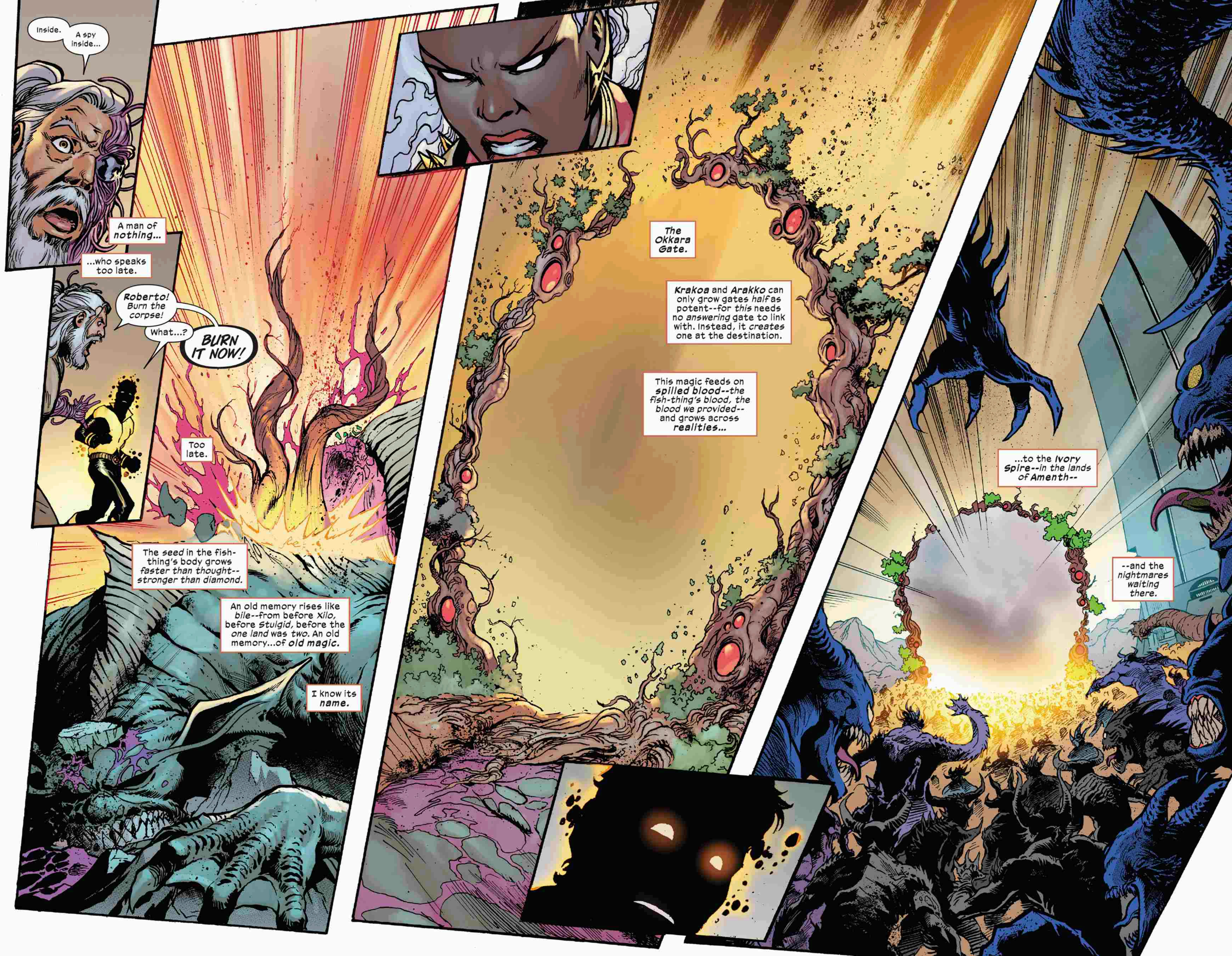
You have no weapon. I have all of them.

You will never escape.



Weakling.

...and what I remain.



Inside. A spy inside...

A man of nothing...

...who speaks too late.

Roberto! Burn the corpse!

What...?

BURN IT NOW!

Too late.

The seed in the fish-thing's body grows faster than thought--stronger than diamond.

An old memory rises like bile--from before Xilo, before Stulgid, before the one land was two. An old memory...of old magic.

I know its name.

The Okkara Gate.

Krakoa and Arakko can only grow gates half as potent--for this needs no answering gate to link with. Instead, it creates one at the destination.

This magic feeds on spilled blood--the fish-thing's blood, the blood we provided--and grows across realities...

...to the Ivory Spire--in the lands of Amenth--

--and the nightmares waiting there.



Arakko.
It's been a
long, long
time.

May
we come
in?

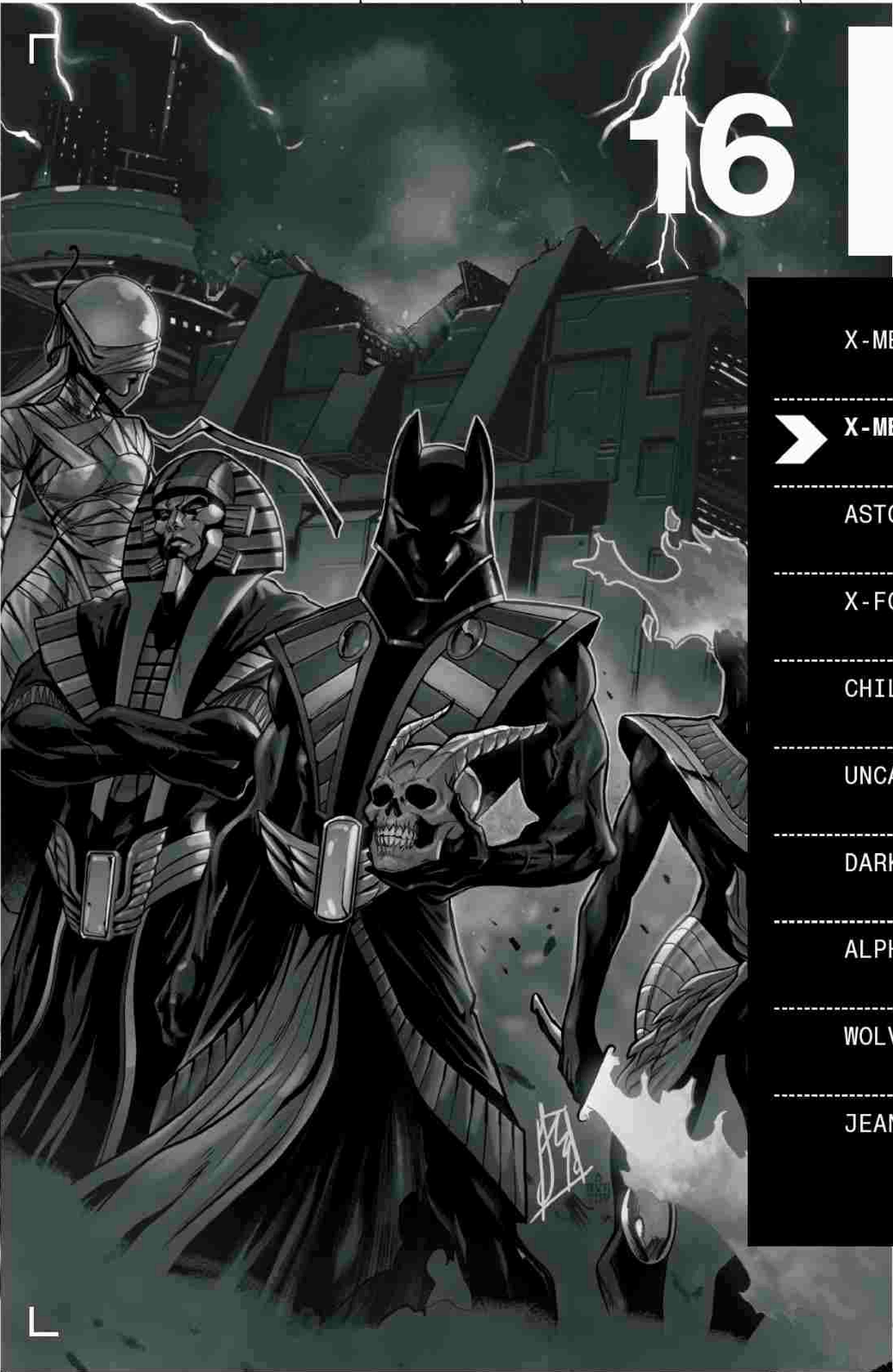


X-KO is MOUNTAINS

for all

!@#%&*~

FOLLOW THE FALL:



!@#%&*~

X-MEN #26:



X-MEN RED #15:

ASTONISHING ICEMAN #2:

X-FORCE #44:

CHILDREN OF THE VAULT #2:

UNCANNY SPIDER-MAN #1:

DARK X-MEN #2:

ALPHA FLIGHT #2:

WOLVERINE #37:

JEAN GREY #2:

From Baaldur, with love...

GLORITH



ADAM & AL